

To the Editor:

In response to your December 13th article, I would like to correct the record. At the Tennessee Ethics Commission's public meeting on October 31st, a draft advisory opinion concerning lawyers registering as lobbyists was first discussed. Following that public discussion among the commissioners (in which Mr. Ramsaur was in attendance and allowed to comment), the Commission staff prepared a new draft of the opinion reflecting those discussions. The new draft was posted on the Commission's public website on November 27th and an e-mail was sent to Mr. Ramsaur so notifying him. On December 4th, a Commissioner e-mailed proposed edits without comment to all Commissioners but no discussion, deliberation or meeting of any kind took place among the Commissioners between the sending of the draft and yesterday's Commission public meeting when the Commissioner's proposed edits were made available to the public prior to the meeting. The draft was subsequently debated by the Commission at its lengthy, four hour public meeting at which time Mr. Ramsaur and others were provided an opportunity to comment.

Since its beginning, the Commission has acted with openness and full compliance with the law. In fact, the Commission has repeatedly gone beyond the mandates of the law by posting the drafts on its public website prior to meetings and inviting interested parties like Mr. Ramsaur the opportunity to participate in meetings. Meeting notices are posted on the Commission's website as well as agendas, minutes, and draft opinions. Secret meetings and deliberations have not and will not take place. I urge your readers and the public to monitor the Commission's website (www.tn.gov/sos/tec/) and attend our next public meeting, scheduled for February 15th, and come to their own conclusions on the independence and openness of the Commission.

Bruce A. Androphy
Executive Director
Tennessee Ethics Commission